WHAT TO DO AFTER THE WAR IS OVER

From an article by Havelock Ellis, January, 1915.[1]

This war—and the fact that there was no power on earth strong enough to prevent this war—is a stain, not only on the civilization and humanity of the twentieth century, but on the mere elementary common sense of the whole world. But having agreed upon that, let us discuss what to do after the war.

First of all, we need a more active, vigorous and practically organized assertion of our ideals. In the present war most of the anti-militarists and Socialists in the belligerent countries have temporarily deserted their principles to support their countries. They have acted reasonably and naturally, and we need not fear that they are not at heart more convinced of their principles than ever before, though it may well be that after the war those who have firmly and courageously maintained their principles will occupy the position of higher dignity and authority. We witness today, however, a great triumph for all those in all countries who regard militarism as supremely important, and who look upon war as, at the worst, an "inevitable necessity," quite compatible with the best interests of mankind. That triumph must not be long-lived, and those of us who think otherwise must see to it that the reaction is so sharp and so severe that militarism will never be able to hold up its head in the world again.

It is difficult to understand how it has come about that militarism has succeeded in maintaining its credit so long, for its fictions are so transparent. Putting aside the claim that war is a good thing in itself, even a great moral force—a claim that could only be made in a civilization which was but a veneered savagery—the chief excuse for military armaments has been that they were a safeguard against war. It is scarcely a plausible excuse. If any one really believed that such a method is the best way to prevent war, he will be able to believe it no longer. After this war any one who puts forth so simple-minded a notion will only meet with ridicule.

Militarism has been deprived of the only support having even the faintest pretence of plausibility which it ever possessed. Today it

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must have become clear, even to the most fanatical admirers of militarism, that the world can no longer be run on militaristic lines. The natural evolution of social order must be allowed to run its natural course. There can be no doubt as to what that course is. In our early societies, when two persons quarreled, they fought out their quarrel, and the strongest won, whether or not his cause was just. That method was so flagrantly unreasonable and disorderly that it was abolished, and the two antagonists were compelled to bring their quarrel into a court of justice, to be decided according to law, and thenceforth the force was no longer behind the antagonists, but behind the court. But it is just as unjust and as disorderly for two nations to settle their quarrels by force as for two individuals. The natural evolution must be allowed to proceed, and nations, like individuals, must bring their quarrels into an international court. That is the aim we now have clearly before us.

The one great fact which this war has brought home to us is that under modern conditions a war is not the mere private concern of the nations that choose to fight. It is the concern of the whole world. In old days two nations could fight while the rest of the world looked on unconcerned and went about their own business. It is so no longer. The non-belligerents suffer only less severely than the belligerents. Look at Holland. Look even at the great and powerful United States. There is no dominion in the civilized world, from Canada to Australia, which is not suffering severely from this European war. Yet they were never consulted about it. Nobody asked their consent. Clearly a monstrous injustice has been committed against the whole civilized world. We have to see to it that in future no war is waged without the permission of all those nations which, however neutral, will have to pay for that war. We have also to see to it that without their participation no peace is arranged.

For some years the more progressive people in the world have been looking toward The Hague with a new hope. Holland is the ancient refuge of the world's intellectual freedom and the traditional home of international law. It has seemed fitting that Holland should be the seat of a great international tribunal to settle the quarrels of nations by a better arbitrament than that of force. But it is vain to expect that this can be effected by mere treaties, just as it would have been idle in the days when justice between man and man was being established to ask Mr. Bill Sykes if he would kindly consent to go and be hanged for his crimes. The reason is that it is always open to a nation to declare that its own state stands supreme over international law, and is not amenable to any claims from without, while even the nations that make no such claim are always liable to become insane at moments; for every state, even the sanest, is more prone to

hysteria than the individuals composing it. It cannot always be trusted to follow the path of virtue toward its neighbors when there is no visible force to hold it in awe.

This futility of mere treaties has long been clear to the more intelligent observers of contemporary affairs. It has now become clear to all. Behind all law there must be a sanction. Just as behind the laws regulating the rights of individuals there is the power of the police, so behind the laws regulating the rights of nations, there must be the mighty power of an international army and navy, able to impose justice on even the strongest of criminal states.

This has always been recognized by those great pioneers who have foreseen the direction of human progress. Hobbes long ago pointed out that states would not preserve peace without some "visible power to keep them in awe." Even William Penn, who was a Quaker and opposed to all force, when in 1693 he put forward his scheme for a European Parliament to maintain the peace of Europe, proposed that any sovereign state which refused to abide by the decisions of the European Parliament should be compelled by force to submission and the performance of the sentence. The Abbe de Saint-Pierre, the most notable of all precursors of the twentieth century in this matter, likewise demanded that the whole of Europe, at its conjoint expense and with its international army, should be empowered to deal with offending states. All these things have long been known to the seeing few. We owe it to this war that they are now beginning to be felt more or less vaguely by all. The way is thus being prepared for the advance of the world's states along a new road. And it is for the neutral nations of today to form the advance guard in that march.

Note.—The supplanting of the rival national armies and navies by an international police force has in recent years become one of the most constant demands of the world's peace party; and the present crisis gives urgent emphasis to this demand. The necessity of any appeal to such power to enforce international decrees, when any real federation of the world is once effected, will of course be rare and slight. The results of the 400 or more international arbitrations of the last century have all been faithfully accepted and observed. When nations have become civilized enough to refer their disputes to arbitration and the courts, they are civilized enough to ensure respect for the verdicts; and Mr. Root, in his address on "The Sanction of International Law," shows clearly how the great and growing sanction is enlightened and developing public opinion. The late Justice Brewer of the United States Supreme Court emphasized the sufficiency of Non-intercourse as the compulsion in any possible exceptional case; and his statement, which follows, is of distinct interest in the present connection:

"It is sometimes objected that there is provided no power to compel obedience to the awards of the International Tribunal. Will it be possible ever to make the nations agree that force shall stand behind the award of arbitrators and compel the nations to yield obedience? I notice that in the program which is being prepared for the coming Interparliamentary Confer-

ence there occurs this provision, as something which it is hoped to see adopted: 'The armed forces of all the nations represented to be at the service of the Congress for the enforcement of any decree rendered by the Hague Court, according to the treaties of arbitration.' Well, it may be that this will be secured. There is one precedent for something of the kind. When the various diplomatic representatives were in danger in Peking, you know the English, the Americans, the Russians, the Japanese and the Germans combined their military forces and sent them to the rescue. So it is possible that some provision will be made by which there can be a union of the forces of the different nations to compel two disputing nations, first to submit their controversy to arbitration, and then to abide by that arbitration.

"But suppose that this is not done—for certainly it is not to be expected that the nations will agree that any one nation shall be a sort of international sheriff or marshal to execute the process of any court; the independence and equality of the nations forbid such an expectation, at least for a generation. It would be very difficult to create a scheme by which the mingled forces of the various nations could be brought together whenever an emergency of the kind that I suggest arises. But is it not possible that there may be a compulsion which the nations cannot resist, which will be potent enough to compel every nation to submit its disputes with other nations to arbitration, and to abide by the award? Our good friend, Dr. Edward Everett Hale, told us years ago, in that story which rang through all the country, of the terrible position of a man without a country. Now, if the nations in the coming conferences at The Hague shall agree that any nation which refuses to enter into arbitration with a nation with which it has a dispute, or which refuses to abide by the award of the arbitrators selected in accordance with the provisions of the Hague convention, or some other convention, shall be isolated from all intercourse with and recognition by any other nation on the face of the earth, can you imagine any compulsion which would be more real and peremptory than that? If all the other civilized nations would say to such a nation, 'From this time forward, until you submit this dispute to arbitration, we will withdraw all our diplomatic representatives, we will have no official communication with you, we will forbid our citizens from having any business transactions with your citizens, we will forbid your citizens from coming into our territory, we will make you a Robinson Crusoe on a desolate island,' there is no nation, however mighty, that could endure such an isolation, such an outlawry, as that would be. The business interests of the nation would compel the government to recede from its position and not longer remain an outlaw on the face of the globe.

"Such a procedure would involve no military force, no bloodshed on the part of the other nations. The only military force, the only bloodshed that might follow, would be in case the nation thus outlawed attempted to attack some of the other nations, when they would all unite in resisting it. The very fact that it was outlawed would place it in a position where it would have to submit; it would be compulsion, as real as a compulsion of a marshal with a writ in his hands. In some such way as this the force which stands back of the court within a nation might possibly be exercised by the nations upon any nation that refused to enter into arbitration or abide by its decisions."

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